

CONMAR

FALL 2006

THE CONTINENTAL MARINE MAGAZINE



PRP

The keepers of our
fallen brothers & sisters

Also inside:

4th CAG pre-deployment training

Fort Worth hosts helo vets past and present

MAG-46 trains for disaster response

Boston native addresses "Weekend Warrior"



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A Marine never faces battle alone.

Cover Story

PRP

These reserve Marines are the caretakers of our fallen brothers and sisters.



Cpl. Stephen Holt

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Front Cover:

Sgt. Scott Reckefus, a 23-year-old native of Manassas, Va., and reserve Marine with Camp Taqadum's Personnel Retrieval and Processing Detachment, folds a flag over a transfer case July 19. Photo by Cpl. Stephen Holt



Back Cover:

The Flying Memorial of Ugly Angels 'Yankee Lima' 37 and 38 make their final approach to the future home of the Close Air Support Aircraft Veterans' Memorial Airpark during the 3rd Annual Cowtown Warbird Roundup held at Meacham Airport in Fort Worth, Texas, Aug. 11 and 12. Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Rusty Baker



Rounds down range

4th CAG preps for Iraq deployment

PVT. ANDREW S. KEIRN

MCB QUANTICO

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — The shouted commands of Marines echoed throughout the smoke-filled streets and inside the dark abandoned buildings as rounds burst through the air toward their targets during a combat training exercise at the Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain training facility July 13.

Reserve Marines of 4th Civil Affairs Group from Anacostia Naval Station in Maryland traveled to the MOUT facility here to take part in pre-deployment training. The Marines received weapons and combat tactics training at Fort A.P. Hill before traveling to Quantico.

“This is extremely important, because operations on urban terrain are part of what we expect to participate in,” said the Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection officer for 4th CAG, Lt. Col. William Hagestad. “We won’t be operating kinetically; we will be supporting the ground combat element as civil affairs Marines working with the local population.”

The Marines in the civil affairs unit will deploy to Iraq and be tasked with the mission to help re-establish security and the economy. They will also be there to facilitate local



Cpl. John E. Long engages targets with an M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. Firing weapons systems, even the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon light machine gun, was important during training to show the importance and relevance of these weapons.

governments so Iraqis can appreciate a democratic society.

During their time at the MOUT facility, the Marines took part in a force-on-force exercise. They were outfitted with flak jackets, Kevlars, face protectors and weapons that fire paint-tipped rounds called simunitions. They were given the task of advancing toward an objective by fire and maneuver. The objective for the exercise was a group of Marines who had been captured and were being held prisoner in a mosque. The rest of the Marines were required to advance toward the mosque by securing surrounding buildings against possible insurgents in order to ensure a successful recovery of the captured Marines.

Cpl. Scott Spaulding, a civil affairs assistant with 4th CAG, participated in the exercise as an aggressor/insurgent.

“I basically positioned myself in a window and sniped the other Marines as they advanced toward the mosque,” Spaulding said. “It was a very fun and valuable exercise.”

Spaulding returned from a deployment in Camp Baharia, Iraq, in March 2005. He spent seven months there and gained experience he can use for this next deployment in the fall.



Pfc. Chokechai Vayavananda

Automatic Weapon during a live-fire exercise on the machine gun training to give Marines an understanding of the function

“This gave us a good idea just how dangerous it can be over there,” Spaulding said. “It gave us an idea of where clearly dangerous areas are and what to do to avoid being pulled into an ambush situation. The last time I deployed, we took part in a lot of foot patrols in heavy urban environments, so we need to be prepared. This training will prepare us to be able to survive while completing our civil affairs mission.”

A concept devised in the late 1990s by the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Charles Krulak, called the “Three Block War,” describes the complex spectrum of challenges likely to be faced by service members on the modern battlefield. In three adjoining city blocks, service members may be required to conduct full scale military action, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief.

Spaulding said that if anyone should be able to fight the “Three Block War,” it should be the Marines of 4th CAG. They have been training to do just that.

To top the day of training, the Marines were visited by the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Reserve

Affairs, H.C. Barnum. Barnum gave the Marines a motivational talk and expressed his appreciation to the Marines for what they are doing.

“The success in Iraq is based on what these Marines will be doing,” Barnum said. “We want to re-emphasize safety and the importance of their mission in Iraq now that we are rebuilding, and this exercise will help them survive their mission.”

Barnum, a former Marine himself, knows the importance of reserve Marines and sees only one difference between them and active duty Marines.

“Marines are Marines,” Barnum said. “But everyone says reserve Marines are different. Reserve Marines are different - they’re mature. They are school teachers, firemen or policemen, and I can’t think of any better people to help rebuild Iraq.” □



Pfc. Chokechai Vayavananda

Cpl. Gary L. Lotridge and Sgt. Michael D. Matuszak, Marines from the 4th Civil Affairs Group, provide cover in order to extract “casualties” from a mock improvised explosive device. Reaction to being hit by IEDs and how to keep the convoy working in synch were emphasized points during the unit’s convoy training.



40 years later

BY SGT. JOEL A. CHAVERRI

Dressed in a Vietnam vintage uniform to aid in the re-enactment, Inola, Okla., resident Mike Schneider pilots the Flying Memorial, Ugly Angel 'Yankee Lima 38,' a restored H-34 Sea Horse that saw more than its share of combat time in the Vietnam War. His son, Jesse, carries a mock-up M-60 machine gun as he poises as the classic helicopter door gunner. Photo by Sgt. Joshua A. Tate

A “A grown man can cry today.” “Beautiful.” “It makes your heart thump.” These are just some of the words that could be heard by veterans when two UH-34 Sikorsky helicopters flew through downtown during the biennial U.S. Marine Corps Combat Helicopter Association reunion held at the convention center in Fort Worth, Texas, Aug. 11.

“It flies as a living memorial,” said Carlos Puente, who served with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-362 from 1966 to 1967. “It’s a beautiful thing to see these still flying and keeping alive the memory.”

One of the helicopters, designated as YL-37, was from Puente’s old squadron, the Ugly Angels, and flew several combat missions in Vietnam. Now, it flies again to preserve the memory of “fallen angels.”

The Ugly Angels was just one of the numerous squadrons represented at the helicopter reunion that drew over 1,400 people this year. However, helicopters weren’t the only vintage aircraft seen in the skies this weekend.

‘Pop A Smoke’ coincided with the 3rd Annual Cowtown Warbird Roundup held at Meacham Airport Aug. 12, an event that benefited the OV-10 Bronco Association, Forward Air Controller’s Museum and the Vintage Flying Museum.

Themed “Welcome Home Vets,” the event showcased more than 30 “warbirds” and drew a large portion of the community to honor the past, present, and future of military aircraft.

Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing showed in force with their commanding general, Brig. Gen. Dave ‘Coach’ Papak, on deck to present many of the reserve wing’s flying assets. History was also relived for

this veteran helicopter pilot as he was reunited with his first commanding officer, now Marine Corps Aviation Association executive director, retired Lt. Col. Art ‘Mad Mex’ Sifuentes.

Locally-based Marine Aircraft Group 41 personnel, along with base operations personnel from their home of Naval Air Station-Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, parked and arranged the static display of all the incoming vintage aircraft as well as their own F/A-18A+ Hornet from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 112 and a KC-130T Hercules from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234. The event couldn’t be complete without a look towards present Marine rotary-wing aviation. Flying in from California-based MAG-46 were a matching set of a UH-1N Huey and AH-1W Super Cobra from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775.

MAG-41 Commanding Officer Col. Juergen ‘Baron’ Lukas noticed that members of the helicopter reunion, mostly veterans of the Vietnam War, were communicating with his active-duty Marines; regaling stories of triumphs, tragedies and close calls too numerous to count.

From one generation to the next, this can do nothing but help Marines who are currently involved in multiple deployments in support of the Global War on Terror, said Lukas.

A special moment during the event was the dedication of a newly restored O-2 Skymaster to 82 men who died flying that airplane during service in Southeast Asia. It was restored by Jerry Stephen, a former O-2 Forward Air Controller and Distinguished Flying Cross recipient who put in countless hours bringing the Oscar Deuce back to life.

Whether to organizers or attendee, it was apparent of the importance of having the event during a time when the nation is at war.

“Our goal is preservation, education, and inspiration,” said Jim “Grump” Hodgson, president of the Bronco Assoc. “I feel that we’re accomplishing each one of those through the Roundup.”

Founded in 1998, the Bronco Assoc. was originally founded to “take responsibility for preserving the history of the people and events associated with the OV-10 Bronco, as well as the history of the aircraft itself” but through the Roundup has created a way for all veterans and their families to unite in a common purpose of honor and respect.

“Service to country becomes service to each other,” said Grump. “Although a lot of work, when you see two old friends say ‘welcome home’ and start to heal old wounds, it’s all worth it.” □

Summer exercise roundup

A KC-130T Hercules with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234, Marine Aircraft Group 41, unloads a group of Marines preparing to take part in a Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise Jan. 11.

Sgt. Joel A. Chaverri

**LANCE CPL. FRANS E. LABRANCHE
& LANCE CPL. EDDIE CURRIE**
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

MARINE FORCES RESERVE, New Orleans – Marines from reserve units take part in numerous exercises throughout the year to complete their annual training requirements and continue their vigilance.

This year's exercises spanned the globe and included Shared Accord, African Lion, the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise, Forest Light and the Okinawa Personnel Training Augmentation Program.

Shared Accord took place in Niger, Africa, in March and included more than 500 service members who were there to promote interoperability between the U.S. and Niger.

The exercise also included a humanitarian mission in Tahoua, Niger, where Marines from 3rd Platoon, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, handed out food and medical supplies to the local citizens. Also, 4th Medical Bn., the Army's 404th Civil Affairs Bn., and the Air Force's 444th Aerospace Medical Squadron provided assistance in the form of limited medical and dental exams, as well as renovation projects.

Marines also trained Nigerian soldiers in basic military tactics as well as search and seizure techniques.

Agadir, Morocco, hosted African Lion 06 in May, an annual exercise designed to promote mutual understanding between the U.S. and Morocco of tactics, techniques and procedures, as well as fostering relationships between troops and leaders.

Company E, 4th Tank Bn.'s involvement in African Lion made history, marking the first time American tanks have been in North Africa since World War II.

This joint service exercise also provided humanitarian aid to the people of Guelmin, Morocco, in the form of

limited medical and dental treatment.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 112, Marine Aerial Refueler Squadron 234, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 41, and Marine Wing Support Squadron 473 provided support for 3rd Marine Regiment's Operation Iraqi Freedom predeployment training in the Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise.

The exercise took place in Kaneohe Bay in January and allowed MAG-41 the chance to train with a new precision targeting system.

In Okinawa, reserve Marines from the 4th Marine



Technical Sgt. Sean M. Worrell



Lance Cpl. John S. Rafoss

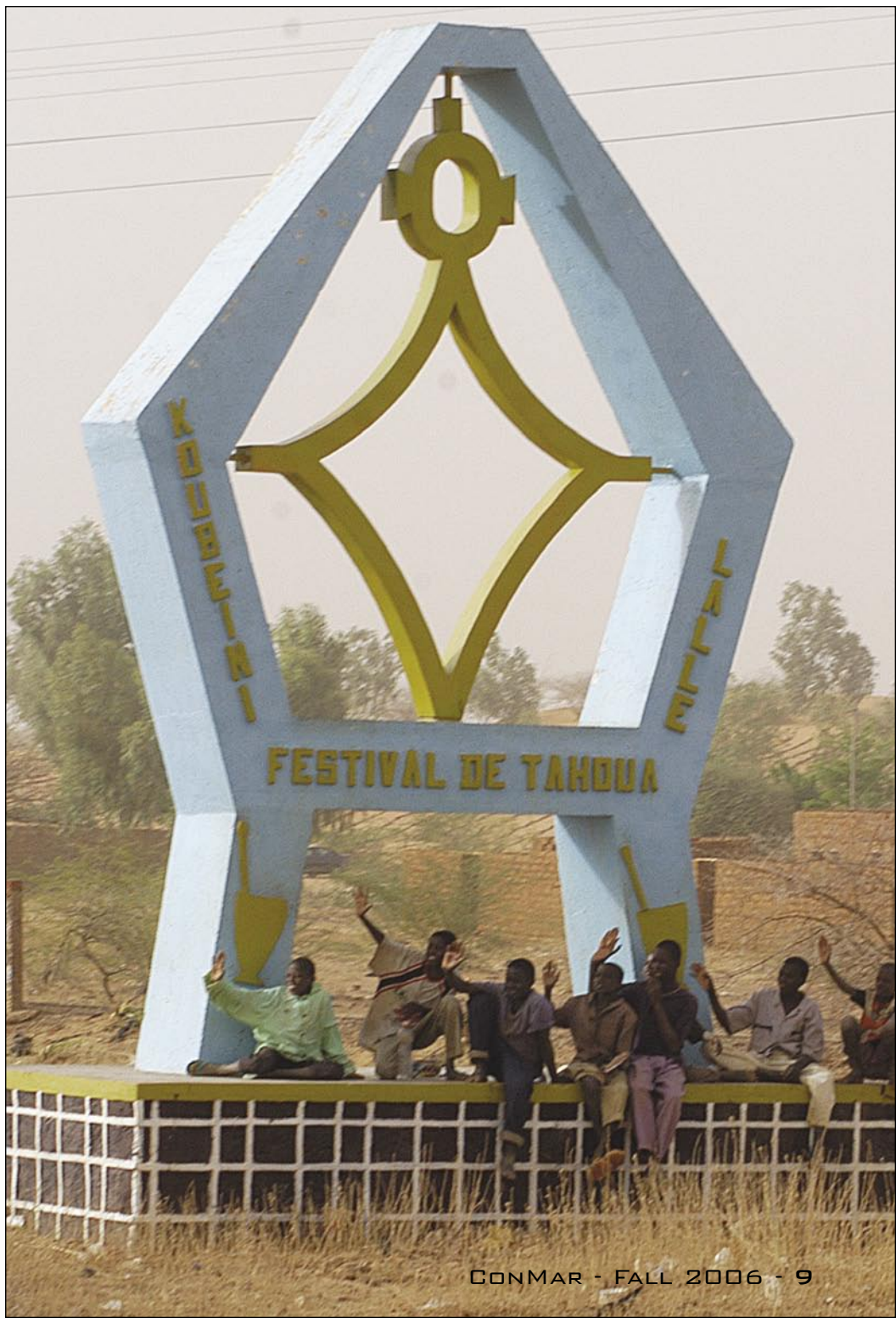
Japanese soldiers perform a rifle salute during the opening ceremony of Exercise Forest Light Feb. 22.

Logistics Group took part in the Personnel Training Augmentation Program at Camp Kinser.

Forty-four reserve Marines trained with active Marines, providing relief support in ordnance and motor transport. The reserve Marines also received training in administration, field radio operation, supply administration and operations, small computer systems, machining, mechanics and metal working.

The continuation of exercises such as these allow Marine Forces Reserve to maintain its ability to be ready, willing, and able to answer the nation's call on a moment's notice to serve both at home and abroad. □

(Right) Nigerien children wave to a convoy of Marines about to distribute Meals, Ready to Eat to the citizens of Tahoua, Niger. The Marines were in Niger as part of exercise Shared Accord 2006, an exercise that brings humanitarian aid to Niger, while allowing bilateral U.S. and Nigerien counter-terrorism training. (Below) Lance Cpl. Jayson Wissmueller from 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, practices firing the M-9 pistol at a firing range in Tahoua, Niger, during Exercise Shared Accord 2006.



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'We know what we
and we're proud to



do is important, do it'

CPL. STEPHEN HOLT

1ST MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq — When Cpl. Julian A. Ramon was killed while fighting terrorists in Ramadi July 20, he began the long journey home to where he'd be laid to rest.

The process of getting Ramon to his loved ones and final resting place started that night in an old Iraqi Air Force hangar, surrounded by his fellow warriors who would make sure he was taken care of.

It is a job few people would want to volunteer for. But for a small group of Marines and sailors in the dangerous Al Anbar province, ensuring their fallen comrades are treated respectfully and make it home safely is a welcomed responsibility.

The Marine Corps' Personnel Retrieval and Processing units, formerly known as mortuary affairs, serve as a stepping stone in the journey home for those killed while serving in what is arguably the most dangerous province for U.S. service members in Iraq.

Called PRP for short, the units are made up of 51 reserve Marines and sailors from various units and job fields and are located here, Al Asad Air Base, and Camp Fallujah.

Here at Camp Taqaddum, a main logistics base located between Fallujah and Ramadi, the Marines have converted an old Iraqi Air Force hangar into the processing center for those killed in the Sunni-dominated area west of Baghdad. A large American flag visible from every corner inside the building hangs above the door where deceased service members are brought through and seems to guard the Marines working there the same way it guards a casket of a fallen American hero.

Outside, the letters PRP outlined in sandbags can be seen labeling the top of the hangar, telling the rest of the base where the fallen are cared for.

When someone is brought in, the PRP unit is all business with reverence. Personal items like ID cards, wedding rings, good luck charms and letters never sent home are all inventoried then packed with the dead service member. Wounds are identified and documented.

While the remains are being tended to, other Marines prepare the metal transfer case covered by an ironed American flag that will carry the remains back to Dover Air Force Base.

"We try to focus on the job and getting it done well and not dwelling on the life that was lost," said Sgt. Jeff Ketterson, 26, a team leader with PRP, from Springfield, Mo.

At times gruesome, as one can imagine injuries could be from a combat zone, the experience of caring for the fallen is also rewarding.

"It's a job we do with respect, and it is an honor to give respect to our fallen brothers and sisters," said Marine Cpl. Jose D. James, a 22-year-old native of

Lance Cpl. Merid Simeon, a 20-year-old native of Atlanta and Marine assigned to the Personnel Recovery and Processing unit at Camp Taqaddum, irons a flag that will be draped over a transfer case July 19. The Marine Corps' Personnel Retrieval and Processing units, formerly known as mortuary affairs, serve as a stepping stone in the journey home for those killed while serving in Iraq.



Cpl. Stephen Holt

Annandale, Va.

This honor and respect is given to anyone who comes through PRP's doors. There have been instances where Iraqi soldiers, contractors and other non-U.S. personnel have been handled by PRP. Whether U.S. or Iraqi, civilian or military, each is honored with a heartfelt and emotional service.

A transfer case draped with the flag of that person's nationality is escorted through a line of military personnel to a vehicle waiting to take the dead to a waiting plane that will take them to their next stop.

Although the job of mortuary affairs is mostly conducted off the main battlefield, the psychological impact is on the forefront of the minds of loved ones.

"My parents worry about the mental health aspect of my job, but they're proud of what I do and that the job gets done right," said James, who feels his job keeps in the military tradition of leaving no one behind on the battlefield.

"It's a job that ultimately has to be done," he said with a tone of certainty.

Having such a demanding

and emotional job takes a unique individual who can deal with the stress of seeing the bodies of fellow service members killed in action.

This reality can sometimes be easier said than done, according to a handful of Marines here who have dealt with seeing friends and acquaintances after they were killed in action.

"It was a shock; when I saw him, the seriousness of the job hit me," said Lance Cpl. Chad H. Gooch, who processed a Marine he attended recruit training with. "I didn't notice that I knew him until I was filling out the

4th MLG Marines attend 4-day PRP seminar

PFC. MARY A. STAES
MARINE FORCES RESERVE

MARINE FORCES RESERVE, New Orleans —During an armed conflict, many things are uncertain. The length of the conflict, where and when attacks will happen, and an array of other factors make up a theatre of war. Death, however, is a constant reality of war.

When Marines die, who is there to take care of the fallen?

Since the recent reorganization of 4th Marine Logistics Group, there are

now Marines who take care of their sisters and brothers who made the ultimate sacrifice - mortuary affairs specialists.

Recently, a four-day seminar was held in Charlotte, Va., versing Marines on new technology and brushing them up on old skills.

"[We] are doing more and more forensic work," said Lt. Col. John M. Cassidy, MarForRes mortuary affairs officer. "The knowledge this course teaches us is to see things that may not be quite right when we are investigating, and we are better



Cpl. Stephen Holt

(From left to right) Corporal Jose D. James, a 22-year-old native of Annandale, Va., Sgt. Scott Reckefus, a 23-year-old native of Manassas, Va., and Petty Officer 2nd Class Matt M. Crooks, a 25-year-old native of Chariton, Iowa, all members of the Personnel Recovery and Processing unit at Camp Taqaddum, complete required personal inventory paperwork for a fallen service member July 19.

paper work.”

With a look of sadness and remorse reflected in his eyes, the 28-year-old recalled seeing his friend and family as they celebrated their boot camp graduation.

This wasn’t the first time Gooch has faced the reality of death. He worked at ground-zero of the World Trade Center terrorist attack directly after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center in New York.

The job of PRP has “parallels” to the roll of a volunteer with the New York City Fire Department, he said.

“There is only so much you can do (once someone is already gone),” said Gooch, who recalled family members asking him to keep an eye out for their loved ones after the terrorist attack.

Many with the PRP unit agree that handling service members killed in action day-after-day is a visible sign of the brutality of war.

“I think these Marines are reminded every day that there is a war going on,” said Maj. Eric C. Young, who is in charge of all the PRP detachments in Al Anbar.

A 33-year-old native of South Glens

Falls, N.Y., Young is the sole active duty member of the PRP unit. He has the responsibility of not only ensuring the mission is accomplished, but that those working for him remain in good spirits.

Young says that this type of job is often given a gloomy prognosis with tales of mental disorders and the emotional toll of handling the dead. Young and his Marines are working to make sure this is not the outcome of their deployment though.

Open communication is critical to managing the pressures of such a

qualified to make better decisions based on the evidence we have and better able to preserve the evidence after these classes.”

The Marines received classes on stages of death and decomposition; carious crime scene recognition; gunshot, cut and stab wounds; and suicide. There were also classes dealing with the time of death based on descriptions of remains.

All of the Marines who attended have deployed to Iraq at least once, so they had a good grasp of the subject, said Cassidy.

The seminar also gave the Marines the prerequisites needed to start the 400 ride-along hours needed to receive medical death investigator certification. After taking a national certification exam, the Marines may become a mortuary affairs specialist in the civilian world.

“I am researching opportunities available to start volunteer hours to get a medical death investigator certification,” said Sgt. Robert A. Bidlack, mortuary affairs specialist for Military Police Co. C, Dayton, Ohio.

Many people may find the job of

personnel recovery unpleasant, but the 24-year-old sergeant has other opinions.

“I have a genuine interest in the field,” Bidlack said. “I also know the honor and dignity of sacrifice that the service members who died have given, and I try to give them the same honor that they have provided for the country,” he said. “I really enjoy my MOS.”

The basic school for mortuary affairs specialists is between six- and seven-weeks long, but there are many advanced classes they can attend. □

demanding job, said Young.

“The main reason we’re getting through this is (that we are) talking about what we see,” explained Gooch.

Young and his Marines, who are volunteers from various reserve units stateside, also put a lot of effort into staying active to build camaraderie and relieve stress.

Many of the PRP members can be found lifting weights, playing video games, playing basketball on the court set up in front of their hangar and even participating in a weekend softball game when not working.

“We’re close here, and if anyone has a problem, we talk about it,” said Ketterson, who gave up construction work to deploy for his second deployment to be with his Marines who have never deployed before.

After six months and more than 200 processing missions, with 132 of those being U.S. service members, keeping morale high and attitudes positive is often a concern for those looking at the PRP mission from the outside.

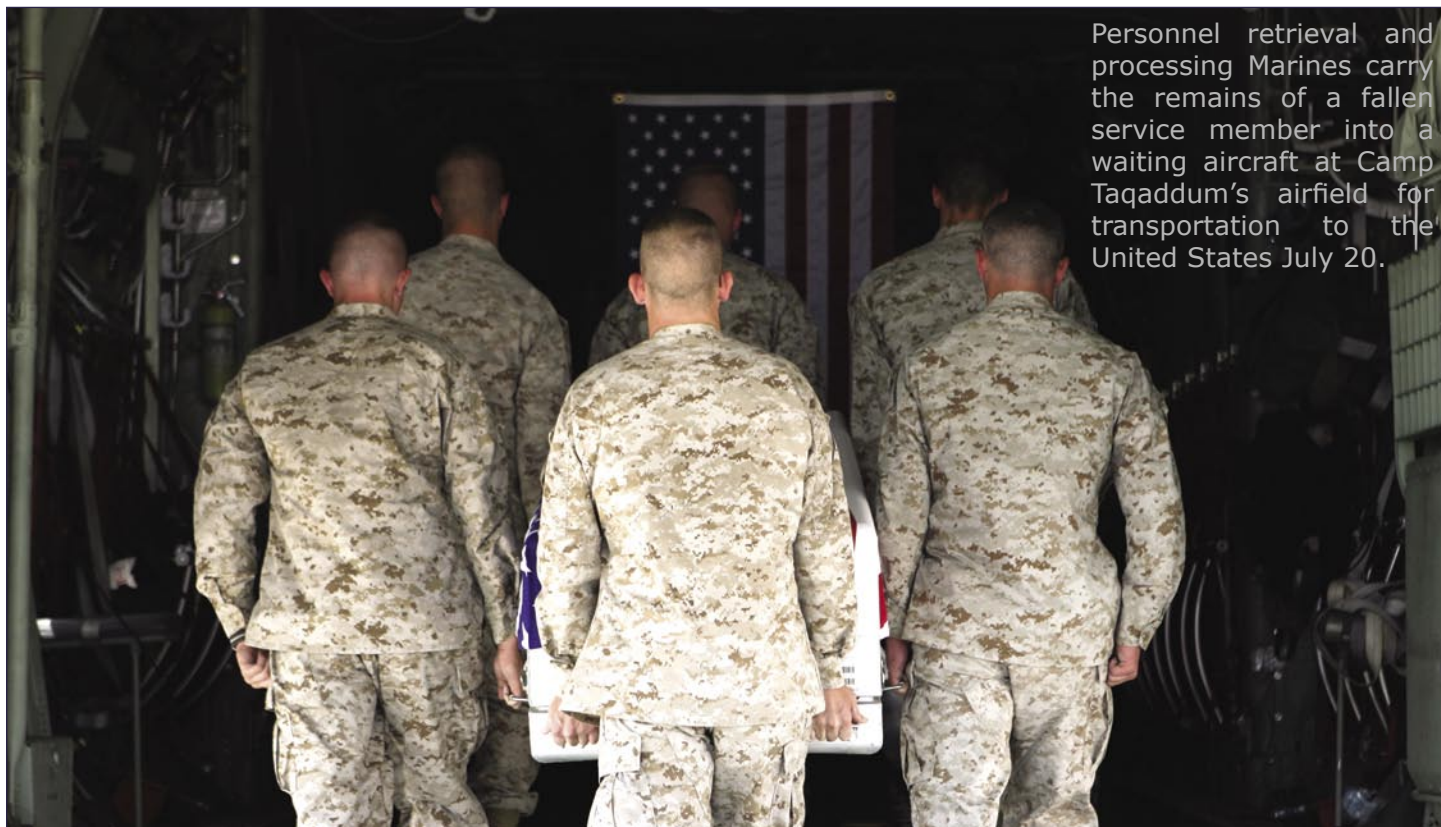
But those on the inside know better, and Ketterson sums up the morale issue easily.

“We know what we do is important, and we’re proud to do it,” he said. “Anytime you’re proud



Cpl. Stephen Holt

Lance Cpl. Merid Simeon, a 20-year-old native of Atlanta assigned to the Personnel Recovery and Processing unit at Camp Taqaddum, irons a flag that will be draped over a transfer case July 19.



Personnel retrieval and processing Marines carry the remains of a fallen service member into a waiting aircraft at Camp Taqaddum’s airfield for transportation to the United States July 20.

Cpl. Stephen Holt

3/14 finishes Mojave Viper

SGT. ROBERT L. FISHER III

MCAGCC

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT

CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — Marines from various active and reserve units across the country joined to supplement Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, as they prepared to deploy to Iraq as Provisional Military Police Battalion, Task Force MP, 3/14.

The unit was activated in April and finished their training with the final exercise of Mojave Viper Aug. 30.

“We have a little bit of everybody,” said 1st Lt. Jason Kaiser, executive officer. “It’s a unique situation. We joined together about a month ago, but we’ve come together to go to combat.”

The unit was largely supplemented with military policemen from MP Company, 1st Marine Division, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, while others came from 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, in Grand Prairie, Texas; and 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, in Seal Beach, Calif.

As Marines from units across the country were joined to fill 3/14’s ranks, no military occupational specialist was spared – artillery, supply, military policemen – Marines from all walks of life in the Corps were taken into the unit.

“We’re a mutt company,” said Pfc. Philip Lawrence, military policeman and Birmingham, Ala., native. “We’re all just stuck together, but it works out.”

Many of the Marines among the unit say they are prepared to go to Iraq, and some of them look forward to the day their boots hit the dirt.

“The anticipation is killing me,” said Lance Cpl. Luis Corro, a supply Marine with Battery G, 3/14, and Newark, N.J., native. “At first, I didn’t want to deploy with this unit. I wanted to deploy with my own unit, but we’ve really come together in the last month.”

While most of 3/14 anticipates landing in Iraq, not every Marine is excited. Some of them just look forward to the experience and the eventual return home.

“I want to get ’r done and get it over with, come home and go back to school,” said Willow Grove, Penn., native Lance Cpl. Michael Berth, from Marine Wing Support Squadron 472 in Elkton, Mass.

The sergeants were given the time to train their own Marines first to better prepare them before coming together.



Sgt. Robert L. Fisher III

A Marine with 3/14 aims in on suspicious activity during his watch into the first night of the final exercise during Mojave Viper Aug. 28.

With the added training before joining, they became more cohesive as one fighting unit, said Sgt. Adrian Perez, Battery D, 2/14.

“The Marines need to have a combat mindset before they go to Iraq, always have the mindset,” said Perez. “Once you’re there, it’s too late.”

The military policemen from Camp Pendleton added their own experience to the Mojave Viper training to give the Marines an added bonus and discard misunderstandings about their job before becoming a military police battalion in Iraq.

“People are often confused about the actual duties of an MP,” said Staff Sgt. Melvin Miller, military policeman with MP Company. He described an MP as a “grunt with a badge.”

“There’s a big misconception about MPs,” he said. “We don’t sit around in squad cars. We don’t man gates. We’re field MPs. Everything we’re doing here in Mojave Viper, we’ll be doing in Iraq.”

The Marines, most working civilian jobs or going to school not long ago, evolved over the last couple months of training into a ready fighting force. While missions change, a Marine’s readiness for combat will not.

“They’ve come a long way since we got them,” said Miller. “In the short amount of time we’ve trained them, they succeeded. They learned to adapt. There’s no doubt in my mind, if the mission changes when we get there, they’ll be able to adapt.”

Marines spearhead disaster-terror response task force

STAFF REPORT

MARINE FORCES RESERVE

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. — First responders from Los Angeles and Orange Counties joined forces with Marine Corps, Navy and Army units to form a Southern California Disaster-Terrorism Task Force. The task force conducted a multi-day earthquake disaster drill that integratee personnel, aviation and ground-based equipment from civilian and military agencies.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the potential for other disasters along with the Global War on Terror, has highlighted the need for the task force and related training.

“This training will enable us to develop and refine our capability to conduct serious incident response operations in support of local, state and national authorities within the western United States and to be prepared to conduct follow-on security and humanitarian operations,” said Col. Stephen T. Ganyard, commanding officer, Marine Aircraft Group 46.

With the introduction of Marine Corps Administrative Directive 589/05, “USMC Roles and Missions in Homeland Security and Defense Support of Civil Authorities,” local commanders can now assist civil authorities when called upon. This directive is based on Department of Defense Directive 3025.1 “Military Support to Civil Authorities.”

“We will deploy personnel and equipment in order to conduct individual and unit level training. At the end of our training, we will have established

a baseline incident response capability for MAG-46, in conjunction with other 4th Marine Aircraft Wing assets based at MCAS Miramar,” said Ganyard. “We will also have gained the experience that will allow us to refine our follow-on training and capability development, identify equipment and capability shortfalls, and formalize our relationships with external agencies and authorities.”

Unit training includes basic fire fighting and first aid, simulator based Engagement Skills Training, crowd control and Search and Rescue training.

Joint Forces Training Base (JFTB) Los Alamitos is a key training installation located within the city limits of Los Alamitos, Calif., approximately 20 miles from downtown Los Angeles.

In the event of a catastrophic incident which cripples Los Angeles and/or Orange County, JFTB Los Alamitos would be a likely staging area for MAG-46, according to the published training guidelines. □



Staff Sgt. P.I. Cox
Firefighter Jesus Carbarjal instructs Cpl. Juan C. Zarazue and Sgt. Oswaldo M. Serpas, both from Marine Aviation Support Squadron 6, Marine Aircraft Group 46, on various 2.5 inch hose techniques.

Reserve Marines train with L.A. first responders

STAFF REPORT

MARINE FORCES RESERVE

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION

MIRAMAR, Calif. — In the wake of several natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, first responders realized the importance of utilizing all available local resources in order to protect the general public in the best possible manner. Taking the initiative, Marines from Marine Aircraft Group 46 and various subordinate units teamed up with first responders from Los Angeles County to train and decide how best to employ local Marine Corps assets in the case of a natural or man-made disaster.

The reserve Marines used their Annual Training to conduct integrated training with professional first responders from the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, and Los Angeles City and County Fire Departments. Each day, Marines broke up into groups to receive training from each agency in how they would help. Due to the location of the San Andreas Fault and likelihood of a real large-scale earthquake, the training scenario was a catastrophic 8.0 earthquake. The training took place at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, Calif., located approximately 20 miles from downtown Los Angeles.

"One of the lessons of Hurricane Katrina is that when local and state officials are overcome by the magnitude of a catastrophe, the U.S. military must be quickly ready to help if asked," said Col. Stephen T. Ganyard, commanding officer, MAG-46, MCAS Miramar, Calif. "In California, we are always under threat of natural or man-made disasters, and the Marine Reservists who make up my command want to make sure that if state or local officials ask for our help, we are ready to respond within hours. We believe that now is the time, and not after a disaster occurs, to learn who we might be working with and how best to support them."

With the introduction of Marine Corps Administrative Directive 589/05, "USMC Roles and Missions in Homeland Security and Defense Support of Civil Authorities," local commanders can now assist civil authorities when called



Staff Sgt P.I. Cox

Members of the Los Angeles Police Department, Metropolitan Division, quell a mock mob who was demonstrating because they lacked access to basic services such as food, water and adequate shelter.

upon. This directive is based on Department of Defense Directive 3025.1 "Military Support to Civil Authorities."

"The most important aspect of this entire training evolution was simply all of the agencies working together utilizing available assets the MAG has to offer," said Cpl. Fred Schmidt, MAG-46 intelligence specialist. "The Marines are always taking the lead in helping people in other countries; however, it's equally important to prepare for any future threat we may have here in our own backyard."

Some of the capabilities the Marines of MAG-46 could bring to the table in a real life natural disaster are the heavy lift capabilities of the CH-53 Super Stallion, medical evacuation via various air transport options, refueling of military and civilian aircraft and fire equipment, water purification reverse osmosis capabilities, crowd control, search and rescue operations and other humanitarian efforts.

Some of the types of training the Marines received included basic fire fighting and first aid, simulator based Engagement Skills Training, crowd control tactics using batons and search and rescue training.

Due to the importance of the training, several high ranking dignitaries attended the press conference which kicked off the last day of training. □

Weekend Warrior no **MORE**

BY SGT. LEO A. SALINAS

Reserve Marines drop stigma



Richard Litto does not like the term “**weekend warrior.**” In fact, he despises it, and the mere mention of the phrase triggers a standoffish response in a thick, South Boston accent.

I “I don’t like it,” said Litto, a reserve Marine on active duty at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass. “We’re all Marines, regardless of what status we’re in.”

And Litto is a true Marine. The 46-year-old sergeant currently serves with Marine Air Support Squadron 6; however, when called up for active duty from the reserves, he wanted to be with the action. He wanted Iraq.

Litto adjourned his civilian duties as a Boston police officer and joined the 6th Civil Affairs Group, a unit that primarily focuses on promoting good community relations in Iraq.

“I made the choice. I volunteered. I wasn’t told I had to go to Iraq,” said the Boston native. “I owe the Marine Corps for everything the Marine Corps has done for me.”

Nowadays, a typical reserve Marine no longer goes by “weekend warrior,” a term derived from reservists who typically trained two days a month, and two weeks a year.

Litto, and thousands like him, have whirled into fast-paced lifestyles as a result of the Corps’ high operational tempo. And reserve Marines no longer dwell in the shadows of active duty but rather shine by augmenting active-duty units. They man the gates in the rear when active-duty Marines deploy, or they join fellow infantrymen in the thick of battle.

Reserve Marines can be found in some of the most dangerous hotspots in Iraq. When mobilized to active duty to the Al Anbar province in 2005, Marines from Ohio’s 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, took perhaps the heaviest toll of any unit: 48 Marines and sailors killed in action.

But a reserve warrior’s daily life on the home front can be much different from active duty, as some are everyday citizens living double lives as Marines. These citizens, however, must nevertheless maintain military standards – and oftentimes where workout facilities, uniforms, and training can be hard to find.

Just getting the basics

On any given Marine Corps base or station – and with little effort – one can usually find barbers, tailors and

military clothing, and prices relatively fixed to suit a Marine’s wallet.

Reserve Marines typically do not have these conveniences. They must explore.

The barber Litto frequents does a very good job for Marine standards – probably the best, Litto said. Ironically, his barber is an Iraqi immigrant.

“He can do a high-and-tight – takes the straight razor right down to the skin,” said Litto.

Litto is lucky because most barbers around Westover are not familiar with the standards he requires, he said.

Minor predicaments add up for reserve Marines, like finding a barber who knows Marine Corps standards or a tailor who can ensure uniforms meet Marine Corps regulations.

Getting creative, Litto’s squadron site commander Maj. Dan Sprenkle said he has taken uniform regulations in writing to local shops so civilian-minded tailors can get it right.

“You have to find a tailor and hope they know what they’re doing,” said Litto. “Order clothing (online) and you don’t know what you’re getting.”

However, Marines are Marines, and Litto doesn’t allow excuses to interfere with upholding standards.

“There’s no excuse in not looking good,” he said.

The model look of a Marine is square-jawed and barrel-chested – an epitome of fitness. Not all Marines look this way, but with a gym in every main area of their installations, most are afforded the opportunity to try. And active-duty Marines can train daily with their units in all climes. Moreover, Marine Corps Community Services, an organization that sponsors recreational activities for Marines and families, offers on-base fitness services ranging from swimming pools to nutrition classes.

Reserve Marines, on the other hand, must adapt.

“We have to present ourselves professionally as Marines,” said Litto. “You want to be the best no matter what because we are the best.”

Marine Corps Community Services does, however, help reserve Marines more distant from the proverbial guard house, as some Marines have discovered.

When the gym shut down on his reserve base, leaving no immediate facility for his squadron to train, Sgt. Alvin Mclean, a Marine formerly attached to the unit, obtained off-base gym memberships so he and his unit, MASS-6, could exercise indoors through the winter. MCCA paid the bill.

A reserve Marine’s versatility abides. □

